

ARBORIVITAL MEDICINE.

BEING AN INQUIRY INTO THE CURATIVE POWERS OF SOME OF OUR
COMMON FIELD AND GARDEN PLANTS, JUDGED OF
BY DISEASES OF THE EAR.

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PYRUS MALUS.—The common crab-apple tree.

The effects observed from giving single doses of the pyrus malus include improvement of defective memory and a strengthening of the brain, in the case of a lady of about 70 years of age, in whom cerebral anæmia presumably existed ; while in another lady, about 45, whose symptoms included weak memory with weakness of the nerves and head, increasing emaciation, with heat and irritation, and vaginal discharge, a leucorrhea which aggravates the head symptoms, as well as an irritation of the skin on the back ; all these improved at once under a single dose of 12 ϕ A. In another case, improvement resulted of indigestion, causing loss of appetite, desire to lie down, and a numb feeling after lunch in the limbs and across the loins, with pain across the lower abdomen ; this was in a girl of about 21 years of age.

In another instance, where palpitation of the heart after breakfast, pain in the left side of the chest and middle of the chest, a sick feeling, and complaint that the slightest work of any kind fatigues the brain ; these symptoms were much relieved by ϕ A. of pyrus.

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But the case that led me to suppose that in *pyrus malus* we possess a remedy of no small importance, was that of a man of about 63 years of age who was suffering from general debility, not very pronounced, and without any definite lesion to account for it ; and who, the day after a dose of *pyrus malus* was given to him, felt, as he expressed it, “ all gone to pieces ;” he was unwilling to move hand or foot, or to stir in the least ; the feeling being a complete depression of mind and of body. He sat on a chair, perfectly still, and apparently unable to move.

It was this that led me to an indication for *pyrus malus* in the following case of Ménière's Disease :

Thomas B., aged 54, a clerk at one of the principal Metropolitan railway stations. No history of syphilis or rheumatism. Date of case, 4th November, 1893. Dates his illness from a sudden seizure he had had five years ago, but beyond this can tell nothing about it. Has been treated by one of the leading physicians of Guy's Hospital, as well as for a considerable time at an Ear and Throat institution. In the description given by the patient, I gathered there were two kinds of vertiginous seizures :

In the most frequent form, the attack came on, particularly, every second day, and most frequently on getting up in the morning. He falls at once if unsupported, and while things seem to turn to the right he falls to the left. But besides these slight seizures, he gets very severe ones every three months, and sometimes oftener, preceded and followed by great physical and mental depression, and which continue for three or four days together. In the right ear he gets constant singing tinnitus, varying but slightly, but worse after a giddy seizure.

On the right side the hearing is defective, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches for the watch, on the left side normal ; tuning-fork heard fairly well. Prescribed *pyrus malus* 12 ϕ A.

Fortnight after, vertigo much better—at once felt better after the dose ; tinnitus, if anything, better ; has had a slight cold. Prescribed nothing.

Second fortnight.—No attack of vertigo, but head does not feel altogether right the last few days. Tinnitus the same, R. E. 17 inches. Again, *pyrus malus* 12 ϕ A.

Third fortnight.—Had two attacks, slight ones ; tinnitus in the right, and deafness the same. R. E. Hg. Dist. 5 inches. Geran Robin : ϕ A.

Fourth fortnight.—Has had two or three slight giddy feelings. R. E. Dist. 20 inches. *Pyrus malus* as above.

Fifth fortnight.—Hearing is the same ; on the evening of the Tuesday following (dose given on a Saturday) for two or three seconds was giddy when walking in the street. Bovista 30, two pilules, three times a day.

Sixth fortnight.—Giddiness better ; but has had two slight attacks and been more depressed. R. H. Dist. 4½ inches. *Pyrus malus* as above.

Seventh fortnight.—Slight attacks ; had two seizures, one momentary, and the other for ten minutes, but not at all severe. The unsteadiness is worse in the evening ; things seem to turn to the right and he falls to the left. The attacks are too slight for himself to notice them, but those with him remarked them. His spirits, however, are much better. R. H. Dist., 6 inches ; L. H. D., 50 inches. Prescribed *callitriche aquat.*, ϕA .

Eighth fortnight.—Slight dizziness whenever he moves his head from side to side. Spirits were better after the medicine. Prescribed *bryon. alb.*, $\phi gtt. j$, in one dose.

Ninth fortnight.—Has been much better ; Monday and Tuesday of this week felt giddy on moving his head, but except for this has felt much better and has heard better the last four or five days. H. Dist., normal on both sides. No medicine.

Tenth fortnight.—Character of the giddiness changed ; any sharp noise strikes up through his head like an electric shock, even his own voice and touching ever so slightly the right ear causes vertigo, but his sleep is more restful the last two or three days. Giddiness most noticed in the street ; the street noises make him feel as if at sea ; noticed this first when working in his garden last Saturday (a week ago). No medicine.

Eleventh fortnight.—Very much better, giddiness going off ; none for two weeks ; no depression and does not turn giddy when touching the ear. Hearing very good. H. Dist., right, 20 in. ; left, normal. No medicine.

Twelfth fortnight.—Keeps well except for momentary and slight sensations of giddiness after getting up to leave the office. H. Dist., R., 20. L., 40 in. Prescribed *calendula off.*, ϕA .

Fourteenth fortnight.—Very much better ; vertigo not noticed ; spirits very good ; no medicine.

Fifteenth fortnight.—More giddy ; the floor seems to rise up when walking, and once the attack lasted six hours ; besides this his voice gets weak when the attacks are about. Prescribed *pyrus malus*, ϕA .

Since this time the patient has remained perfectly well ; he has written to me expressing the greatest gratitude, and besides I have had several opportunities of hearing of his sustained improvement from others.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of this case.

First.—Let me point out how manifestly the hearing varied ; this I consider arose from slight effusions taking place now and then into the semi-circular canals.

This is altogether different with what we meet with in ordinary cases of deafness ; I doubt if it is possible to find a case of catarrhal, nervous, vascular, or cerebral deafness in which it could be proved by the watch that the hearing varied to the extent that it did in this case ; a most interesting feature in connection with aural disease and showing how variety is discoverable even in this class of affection if sufficient research be instituted.

Second.—The pronounced effect of *pyrus malus* is noteworthy ; I consider the improvement to have been effected by it, and by it alone ; the reports given are full ones and the reader can judge for himself. It would seem from these that *bryonia alba* did him good, but my impression is that its action was superficial and transitory ; the other selections hardly deserve notice.

Third.—The cure of the case occupied eight months, during which period he remained at full work and kept free from the awful distress from which he had previously suffered, and with which he had frequently been invalided from work. The duration of treatment, considering he had been a martyr to head symptoms for five years, need not be cavilled at.

Still, I must be allowed to ask the question, would it have been possible to have cured him in a shorter space of time ? Judging from the effects of these simple plant remedies I should say, most certainly it would. Had I kept to the *pyrus malus* and given, upon the third fortnight, a dose taken from the same tree at another season of the year, or from another tree of a different variety of the *pyrus*, of which there are legion, I have good reason for saying the cure would have been thereby expedited very considerably.

This is a point upon which I claim the privilege of expressing an opinion, speculative though it be, and one that can be accepted or not as the reader thinks fit. Though speculative as regards this case, it rests upon actual experience in many other obstinate forms of disease.

My preparation of the *pyrus malus* was not at all to my liking, having been made in the Autumn from the succulent branch of the crab-apple tree when it had finished fruiting ; whereas a

preparation more theoretically correct would be one taken earlier in the season from the flower and flower buds with the branchlets and tender leaves. In preparing the tincture I may mention it was made from the living tree, the branch being plunged into proof spirits of wine and exposed for an hour, the 12 ϕ A., to a fairly bright autumn sun ; heliosthened, as I term it. (See introduction to these papers).

To this I do not attach an importance sufficient to justify a pronouncement at present ; I may, however, express a scepticism as to any artificial increase in power ; the more so when I see decided effects to ensue from the juices of plants preserved without any exposure to sunlight or any other manipulation beyond the admixture of spirit for preservation purposes.

It forms no part of the intention of these papers to refer to, or in any way notice what is generally termed the chemical active principle of the plants or trees under investigation.

I have before stated that my object was to observe the pure effect forthcoming upon the human body from the administration of single doses of the pure juices of plants preserved as I have pointed out.

But while this is the case, it beyond question adds to the interest of our remarks to point to the researches into the actions of the substances touched upon made by others who work from entirely different directions.

In the *Journal Belge d' Homœopathie*, October, 1894, is the following paragraph that cannot fail to interest us all in this connection.

“ Dr. Coolen has taken up the experiments made by von Mehring in 1886 with *florizine* (a glucoside extract from the root of the apple tree.) He has found, like the latter, that this product has the remarkable power of developing glycosuria only ; according to Dr. Coolen, this property is alone manifested when injected into the cellular tissue. Injected into the stomach or intestines, it does not produce any visible effect, and the analysis of the urine does not disclose sugar. What is important to know is that the injection of a certain quantity of florizine produces more effect upon a subject who has once submitted to it than upon one experimented upon for the first time ; even if the glycosuric action of the first experiment can no further make itself felt. In consequence of this the author has asked if he had not the means of producing a permanent

diabetes, but he has not succeeded ; some days after the last injection all trace of glycosuria would disappear. What is necessary to note also is a remarkable adaptation of the organism to the intoxication which would appear to be imposed on it ; thus it is remarked that rabbits eliminate masses of sugar and their weight varies little or nothing. These animals were in nutritive equilibrium, as perfect as possible, from the commencement of the experiment. There would not remain, according to M. Coolen, any way of explaining this except by recognizing that these animals have instituted economies in other products of waste. These teachings are gleanings from *La Clinique*, the official organ of the Brussels Hospitals, 11th October, 1894."

I have good reason for saying that the great depression which sometimes accompanies the action of *pyrus malus* constitutes a characteristic for it in cases of abdominal tumors accompanied by a like symptom : in very hopeless cases of this kind, I would urgently entreat *confrères* to give a single dose of *pyrus malus* and allow it to expend its activity in the organism and not to repeat it until all trace of such action had disappeared, even though this might not be for weeks or even months.

In many ways the direction taken in the action of *pyrus malus* reminds me of the effect of *zincum metallicum* ; the slowly progressing irritation of the brain giving rise to sympathetic disturbances in the abdominal viscera ; with *zincum*, in the kidneys causing enuresis, and with *pyrus malus* in the stomach occasioning indigestion and various forms of gastric disturbance.

I have been in the habit of recommending small doses of malic acid in the vomiting of pregnancy as well as in sea-sickness for a number of years ; and once, on mentioning this to a very intelligent chemist, he told me he had observed the same effect, and had at one time thought of putting it up as a patent remedy for both these complaints, so generally successful did it prove. The juice of a sour apple, obtained by pouring water on to an apple cut into small pieces and crushed in a tumbler, and allowed to stand for an hour or so, forms a most refreshing drink on board ship, especially when the tendency to sea-sickness is urgent.